

# The History of Communication Studies

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An overview of the major phases, scholars, theories, and institutions that have shaped the discipline.

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## 1. Foundations (Late 19th?–?Early 20th Century)

| Period       | Key Developments                                           | Representative Figures                            | Core Contributions                                                                                         |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Late 1800s   | Emergence of <i>mass media</i> (newspapers, telegraph)     | <b>Harold D. Lasswell</b> (political scientist)   | Introduced the “ <b>Lasswell model</b> ” – <i>Who says what in which channel to whom with what effect?</i> |
| 1910s? 1920s | Rise of <b>sociology &amp; psychology</b> in communication | <b>Charles Horton Cooley, George Herbert Mead</b> | Explored <b>symbolic interaction</b> and the formation of the self through communication.                  |
| 1930s? 1940s | Institutionalization of communication research             | <b>Paul Lazarsfeld, Hadley Cantril</b>            | Pioneered <b>survey research, media effects studies</b> (e.g., <i>The People's Choice</i> ).               |

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## 2. The “Golden Age” of Mass?Media Research (1940s? 1960s)

### 2.1 Major Paradigms

- **Media Effects** – *hypodermic needle* model ? **limited effects** (two?step flow, opinion leaders).
- **Agenda?Setting** – *McCombs & Shaw* (1972) – media shape what audiences think about.
- **Uses & Gratifications** – *Blumler & Katz* – audiences actively select media to satisfy needs.

### 2.2 Institutional Milestones

- **1947** – Founding of the **Institute for Communication Research** at Stanford.
- **1954** – Creation of the **International Communication Association (ICA)**.
- **1955** – Launch of the journal “**Communication Research**.”

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## 3. The Expansion Era (1970s-1990s)

| Sub-field                    | Core Ideas                                      | Leading Scholars                  |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Cultural Studies             | Media as sites of power, ideology, identity     | Stuart Hall, Raymond Williams     |
| Critical Theory              | Critique of capitalist media structures         | Jürgen Habermas, Herbert Schiller |
| Semiotics                    | Sign systems & meaning-making                   | Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco       |
| Interpersonal Communication  | Relational dynamics, self-disclosure            | John Gottman, Mark Knapp          |
| Organizational Communication | Communication as central to organizational life | Karl Weick, Linda Putnam          |

### 3.1 Methodological Diversification

- **Qualitative approaches** (ethnography, discourse analysis).
- **Quantitative advances** (structural equation modeling, longitudinal surveys).
- **Mixed-methods** became standard for complex communication phenomena.

### 3.2 New Institutional Players

- **1973** – Formation of the **National Communication Association (NCA)**.
- **1982** – Launch of “**Journal of Communication**” as a flagship peer-reviewed outlet.

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## 4. Digital Turn & Convergence (1990s-2010s)

| Theme                                 | Description                              | Notable Works                 |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) | Study of email, chat, early social media | Manuel Castells, *The Rise of |